



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 18, 2011

Contact: Chris Conlan 858-694-2137

Greg Slawson 858-495-5385

HANTAVIRUS FOUND IN SOUTH COUNTY

Use Bleach and Mops to Clean Up After Rodents, Don't Sweep or Vacuum Droppings

Two rodents trapped during routine monitoring last week in Chula Vista have tested positive for the potentially-deadly hantavirus.

Infected rodents rarely pose a danger to people when they are in the wild. But when rodents infest homes and garages, people can contract hantavirus by inhaling dust particles from rodent droppings and nesting materials that contain the virus. There is no treatment, vaccine or cure for hantavirus infections, which are deadly in 38 percent of cases.

"People should never sweep up or vacuum rodent droppings or nesting material when they find it," said Jack Miller, director of the County Department of Environmental Health. "Instead, they should ventilate closed areas for at least 30 minutes, and then carefully spray a 10 percent bleach solution or a full-strength disinfectant on the contaminated materials before removing them."

The best way to prevent the disease is to keep mice out of houses, garages and sheds by sealing holes larger than the size of a dime, County officials said.

Hantavirus can cause hantavirus pulmonary syndrome (HPS), which begins with flu-like symptoms but can escalate, causing severe breathing difficulties and even death.

The rodents that tested positive during the last week included one deer mouse and one vole found in the same location in Chula Vista. Forty-five rodents have tested positive for hantavirus in the county this year, compared to 21 in 2010.

For more information contact the County Department of Environmental Health at (858) 694-2888 or visit <http://www.sdcountry.ca.gov/deh/pests/hantavirus.html>. Watch: ["Hantavirus - The Airborne Menace."](#)

###

FOLLOW THE [COUNTY](#) ON [TWITTER](#), [FACEBOOK](#) AND [YOUTUBE](#)

COUNTY COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

1600 PACIFIC HIGHWAY, ROOM 208 • SAN DIEGO, CA 92101-2472



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 18, 2011

How to Avoid Exposure to Hantavirus:

- Eliminate rodent infestations immediately.
- Avoid rodent infested areas. Do not stir up dust or materials that may be contaminated with feces and urine.
- Clean up rodent droppings and urine using the wet cleaning method described below.

Use “Wet-Cleaning” Methods To Prevent Inhaling The Virus:

- **DO NOT SWEEP OR VACUUM INFESTED AREAS.**
- Ventilate affected area by opening doors and windows for at least 30 minutes.
- Use rubber gloves. Spray a 10 percent bleach solution (2 tablespoons bleach to 1 cup of water), or other full strength disinfectant onto dead rodents, rodent droppings, nests, contaminated traps, and surrounding areas and let the disinfectant stand for at least 15 minutes before cleaning. Clean with a sponge or a mop.
- Place disinfected rodents and debris into two plastic bags, seal them and discard in the trash.
- Wash gloves in a bleach solution, then soap and water, and dispose of them using the same double-bag method. Thoroughly wash your bare hands with soap and water.

###

FOLLOW THE [COUNTY](#) ON [TWITTER](#), [FACEBOOK](#) AND [YOUTUBE](#)

COUNTY COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

1600 PACIFIC HIGHWAY, ROOM 208 • SAN DIEGO, CA 92101-2472